and you will find, Sir, that action has indeed been taken and the responsibility of the Department of Company Affiars remains. The Department of Company Affairs also has to improve; yes, the Registrars of Companies who are spread over a number of cities in the country, they also have to improve. This is the totality.

LPG pipeline between Visakhapatnam and Hyderabad

*109. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Gas Authority of India Ltd. (GAIL) is planning to convert its Rs. 490 crores exclusive LPG pipeline into a natural gas transportation pipeline which runs from Visakhapatnam to Hyderabad and Secunderabad; and

(b) the details of the steps being taken to develop gas distribution network in Visakhapatnam, Amlapuram, Bhimavaram, Rajahmundry, Kakinada and Secunderabad which are on the route of the pipeline?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) GAIL (India) Limited (GAIL) is examining the possibilities of use of a part of the Vizag-Secunderabad LPG pipeline for natural gas transportation.

(b) GAIL has approximately 716 Km. of pipeline network in Andhra Pradesh and is supplying about 7.74 Million Standard Cubic Meters Per Day (MMSCMD) natural gas in the State through the Krishna-Godavari (KG) Basin Pipeline network and Tatipaka Lanco Pipeline. This includes the recently completed 69 Km. pipeline at a cost of Rs. 113.5 crore under KG Basin Phase-II. These pipeline cover Rajamundry, Vijayawada, Kakinada, Amlapuram and Bhimavaram regions in Andhra Pradesh. Presently, there is no gas pipeline to supply natural gas in Vizag and Hyderabad-Secunderabad. In a phased manner pipeline network may be expanded to supply natural gas to these cities also.

SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Sir, the GAIL has entered into a joint ventue agreement with the HPCL. The GAIL is also supposed to tie-up with the IOC and the BPCL. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to why there is so much delay in tying up with the IOC and the BPCL in developing the markets of Rajahmundry, Vijayawada, Kakinada, Amalapuram areas.

SHRI RAM NAIK: Sir, this supplemenary has nothing to do with the main question, which is about the pipeline. The pipeline is expected to be completed in August, 2003. I can share this information with the House that we are going to complete it by April-end. So, it will be done early. That work will be beneficial for Andhra Pradesh.

*110. [*The Questioner (Shri Anil Sharma) was absent for Answer vide page.* 30 *infra*]

Privatisation of public sector banks

*111. SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH:†
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to privatise the public sector banks as the tenth plan has advocated repeal of the Bank Nationalisation Act to enable banks to become ordinary companies operating under the Companies Act;

(b) if so, whether Government have considered the suggestions. and

(c) if so, when final decision in this regard likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) No, Sir. No proposal to privatise public sector banks is under consideration of the Government. What is proposed is an amendment of the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970/1980, with a view to modifying the stipulation of minimum prescribed Government shareholding in nationalised banks from 51% to 33%. This is to enable nationalised banks to raise capital from the market without affecting the public sector character

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri K. Natwar Singh.